

Washington, DC –Today, Congresswoman Linda T. Sánchez joined President Barack Obama, First Lady Michelle Obama, Education Secretary Arne Duncan, and Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius at the White House for a Conference on Bullying Prevention. Congresswoman Sánchez was invited to the conference because of her leadership in Congress in pushing for anti-bullying legislation.

“For too long, we’ve looked at bullying as a nuisance or a rite of passage.□ Bullying is violent and destructive behavior and must be treated that way,” said Congresswoman Sánchez. **“Students have the right to a safe and comfortable school environment, free from fear and intimidation.□ I’m glad that President Obama is taking an active role in bullying prevention, and I’m hopeful that we can pass legislation in Congress that protects students from bullying.”**

Since coming to Congress, Congresswoman Sánchez has made providing students with safe schools a priority. In the previous two sessions of Congress, Congresswoman Sánchez introduced the Safe Schools Improvement Act that would help solve the dangers of bullying by requiring schools and school districts to ban bullying and harassment. This legislation would ensure that schools protect students, whether they are being targeted based on their race, gender, real or perceived sexual orientation, or any other basis. Congresswoman Sánchez plans to re-introduce this legislation shortly.

Last month, Congresswoman Linda T. Sánchez introduced the “Put School Counselors Where They’re Needed Act” (H.R. 667). This legislation would provide vital funding for high schools with high drop-out rates to hire additional counselors. Nationwide statistics indicate that 10% of high school dropouts cited bullying for quitting school.

In March 2009, Congresswoman Sánchez introduced the “Bullying and Gang Reduction for

Improved Education Act,” which would allow schools to better implement bullying and gang prevention programs. These bills are part of the Congresswoman’s “Safe Kids Initiative,” designed to ensure that students are safe and supported at school so that they can obtain a quality education.

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